

UNDERSTANDING SHAKESPEARE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO UNDERSTAND THE BARD

What do you know about Shakespeare already? Take a few moments to write down your thoughts before we get started. What do you think about Shakespeare's language?

IAMBIC PENTAMETER



Please turn to Act One, Scene One

Now that we've translated modern English into iambic pentameter, it's your turn to try it out. Using the first act as a guide.

Homework:

CREATE YOUR OWN SOLILOQUY
Read Act I, Scenes I and II, paying attention to the character's language and what it says about them.
Then, using the information that we learned today in class about iambic pentameter, create a 10-line soliloquy for a character of your choice. Your soliloquy must use iambic pentameter, although you may use modern English, and characterize your character. We will present these in class tomorrow.

Modern Day Romeo



Now that we know a little more about iambic pentameter, why don't we translate Shakespeare's original speech to modern English?

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Now that we've translated modern English into iambic pentameter, let's pair up and reverse the process using the text as a guide.

Please turn to Act One, Scene One

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Please bring to class



Now that we know a little more about iambic pentameter, why don't we translate iambic pentameter back to modern English?

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Meter: organized, underlying rhythm
-da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM
-every other syllable is stressed
-da DUM=an iamb

-5 feet in a line of text
(One foot= da DUM)
-This is where we get the name pentameter: Rhythm of 5

Let's look at the first line of the text:

Hence, home, you idle creatures, get you home!

Let's break it down!

How many syllables are in the text?
How can we break that into iambs?

Into feet:
get home/ you id/le crea/tures
get/you home

Into stressed and Unstressed:
get HOME/ you ID/le CREA/tures
GET/you HOME

Meter: organized, underlying rhythm

-da DUM da DUM da DUM da
DUM da DUM

-every other syllable is stressed

-da DUM=an iamb

-5 feet in a line of text
(One foot= da DUM)
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the name pentameter:
Rhythm of 5

+

Let's look at the first line of
the text:

Hence, home, you idle
creatures, get you home!

Let's break it down!

Intro feet:

How many
syllables are in
the text?

How can we break
that into iams?

Into feet:

get home/ you id/le crea/tures

get/you home

Into stressed and Unstressed:

get HOME/ you ID/le CREA/tures

GET/you HOME

Let's play a little game so that we
can get used to this rhythm

Some Things To Keep In Mind

There are some exceptions
to iambic pentameter!

Feminine endings have 11 syllables,
while Trochees are only
made up of 4 feet

FEMININE ENDING

To be or not to be, that is the question
(Hamlet, 3.1)

TROCHEE:

Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
Finger of birth-strangled babe.
(Macbeth, 4.1.27)

Shakespeare also wrote in prose,
which does not follow the form
of Iambic Pentameter.

Blocks of prose look like this:

Some characters share lines
to keep the meter. What do you
think this suggests about
the characters?

Modern Day Brutus:



Now that we know a little more
about iambic pentameter, why
don't we translate Gretchen's
speech to make it fit
Shakespeare's criteria?

Now that we've translated modern English into iambic Pentameter, let's pair up and reverse the process using the text as a guide.

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